Articulating english to specific content areas at Pontificia Bolivariana University

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Abstract

The Pontificia Bolivariana University has decided to look for alternatives to make the study of English more relevant for students' professional practice. The authors of this article consider that Content Based Instruction (CBI) offers scenarios in which content and language learning can be developed in order to fulfill this goal. This article provides information in regards to the first stage of a five-phased project, designed for the Pontificia Bolivariana University. The first phase, which is described in this article, presents the context and background of the project, the CBI theoretical background intended to structure the CBI - Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana (UPB) model, the methodology developed to articulate content and language for this experience, the line of inquiry and some project implications.

Key Words: Content Based Instruction CBI, content-teacher, language teacher, teaching process, content, language, learner, learning process.

Resumen

La Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana ha decidido buscar alternativas para hacer que el estudio del inglés tenga una posición relevante dentro de la práctica profesional de los estudiantes. Los autores de este artículo consideran que la Instrucción Basada en Contenidos (CBI) ofrece escenarios en los cuales el aprendizaje de contenido y lengua pueden desarrollarse para cumplir con este propósito. El artículo contiene la información acerca de la primera de cinco fases de un proyecto académico diseñado para la Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana. Por lo tanto, se procede a presentar el contexto y antecedentes del proyecto, el marco teórico de CBI que servirá para estructurar el Modelo CBI-UPB, la metodología propuesta para articular el contenido y la lengua en esta experiencia, algunos interrogantes que orientan la búsqueda y posibles implicaciones derivadas del mismo.

Palabras Clave: Instrucción Basada en Contenidos (CBI), el profesor experto, el profesor de lengua, la enseñanza, el contenido, la lengua, el estudiante, los procesos de aprendizaje

Introduction

As a group of professionals in foreign language teaching, we feel that the teaching and learning of English need to be developed in environments where language is used to convey ideas about different referents of the world. The University setting and the fields of knowledge ascribed to it, present themselves as the most conducive scenarios for such learning. The content, of different fields of knowledge present a cognitive challenge for students; simultaneously, the language in which such content is expressed, makes its learning necessary and relevant. Thus, among the approaches currently in use in different educational settings, we consider that Content-Based Instruction, CBI, offers alternatives for the articulation of content and language learning.

The purpose of this article is to inform the academic community about an attempt to establish Content Based Instruction as an approach to learning both content and foreign language in the graduate and undergraduate programs offered by Pontificia Bolivariana University. A research group was established to develop a model which encompasses the institutional needs and concerns to fulfill the policies within its Institutional Project as well as its Development Plan.

The article will provide information about the context and the background where the project is being conducted. There is a historical overview of the teaching of languages at the University and a statement about the role of English in the institution. We will then give an account of the CBI theoretical framework and its perspectives in the construction of the CBI Model for Pontificia Bolivariana University. Here we provide a historical outlook of language teaching. We briefly address communicative language teaching, we discuss the CBI foundations and their particular contributions to the development of the CBI-UPB Model and indicate the three overriding concepts derived from the model: the teacher and the teaching process, the relationship between content and language, and students and their learning processes. Additionally, we include the line of inquiry whose framework relies on the hypothesis that states that professionals at UPB will develop both academic and linguistics competencies in a foreign language if teachers make conscious attempts to incorporate cognitively challenging activities that require the appropriate use of the language as well as the involvement of the students in their learning process. Finally, we conclude the article by stating some project implications, and the possible scopes for its future application within the academic community.

Context and background

The Pontificia Bolivariana University is a private institution located in Medellín, Colombia. It offers 32 undergraduate programs and 105 graduate programs. It is divided into different Schools that offer an array of programs such as: Engineering, Architecture and Design, Social Sciences, Education and Pedagogy, Economics and Administration, Law and Political Sciences, and Medical Sciences. Along with the rest of universities in the country, this institution is committed to working with high quality standards and to obtaining its Program and Institutional Accreditation Certificate. To meet the accreditation standards the university has stated in the Development Plan 2004-2007 (Plan de Desarrollo Universitario 2004-2007) and in its Institutional Project (Proyecto Institucional), three important policies regarding *Internationalization, Research Development and Foreign and Domestic Connectivity.*

Foreign language teaching has been the responsibility of two academic units at the university. In the past, the School of Education imparted English, French and Italian language courses. During the 1980's, Dr. Manuel Angel led the processes of the *Modern Languages Department,* one of his projects was to implement English for Specific Purposes at the School of Engineering. In 1994, the *Language Center* was created as an academic unit. Since then, it has been offering English, French, Italian, German and Japanese language courses to different types of audiences: undergraduate and graduate students, university professors, and external public: children, teenagers and adults. According to the Center's documents, the methodology implemented in language teaching has been the communicative approach. This approach has different types of limitations in the achievement of its goals. This is mainly due to the fact that the programs and their implementation do not meet student needs and expectations; therefore, there is little student commitment and motivation towards language learning.

In the year 2002, a survey on the impact that the Language Center courses had upon students´ expectations and their relevance was conducted. The results showed that there is little content connection of the courses due to their methodology. On this particular issue students pointed out that the courses were unclear and of little meaning because they were not linked to their particular academic needs.

At this time, an academic experience involving foreign language learning in specific areas was also being conducted. Some professors from the School of

Engineering and a teacher from the Language Center teamed up to develop ESP courses. These courses intended to enhance student motivational improvement through relating English Learning to their academic context. At the time, it was thought that ESP was a suitable alternative to work with because it increased English use and relevance in academic tasks. The dynamics of the experience along with the participants' performance and their feedback generated the possibility to explore other alternatives to language learning in which there would be a greater degree of cognitive involvement.

All the previous experiences and their outcomes became a part of a series of ongoing reflections in the groups that lead university policy making. As a result, the School of Education decided to include the experience as part of their main research project, ´Fortalecimiento de los Processos de Enseñanza Aprendizaje en el Ámbito Universitario.´

This macro-project is currently developing three lines of inquiry namely, Virtual Learning Environments, Pedagogy and Didactics, and Content Based Instruction, as a means to enforce university policies in regards to *Internationalization, Research Development and Foreign and Domestic Connectivity.*

Content-based instruction: theoretical background

This section of the article will provide the theoretical framework for CBI starting with a historical outlook of language teaching. Then it goes onto addressing Communicative Language Teaching, the need to teach English as communication and some of its implications. Finally, the advent of CBI in various research and academic settings is presented giving a much clearer view on how to develop communication in foreign language classes by effectively adding the cognitive perspective of content, the authenticity of materials and tasks, and the involvement of learners in their learning process. This theoretical background served as the basis for the implementation of the project in our university.

Background

Every now and then theoreticians, curriculum administrators and scholars look at the development of different issues in language-teaching. It is common

to read articles that deal with the ***state of the art*** in topics such as linguistics and pragmatics; it is also common to find publications that revisit different areas such as language acquisition, child development etc. The language teaching field has not been the exception, and it is common to find in the literature, the history of language teaching since its beginnings in the Grammar Translation Method followed by the advent of *"modern"*[1] foreign language teaching with Gouin and the Series Method, and the Direct Method until the end of the nineteen century. (Brown, 1994:55-56)

The twentieth century brought about the ideas of American structural linguistics and behaviorist psychology whose theoretical underpinnings established the Audiolingual Method (ALM) as the "*scientific descriptive analysis*" of how languages work from both of their perspectives. The new point of view that the ALM brought about did not last long, and could not withstand the study of growing disciplines such as linguistics, psychology, and the innovative spirit of method designers in the decade of the seventies. All these methods were based upon theories of language and learning; they had objectives to achieve and a syllabus to follow. They also included teacher and student roles as well as activity types and materials.

Although these methods offered a new air to the teaching field, they were not strong enough to present a definitive response to the demands of teaching situations and their complexities. Most people took the option of using different methods according to their strengths and applied them in their teaching contexts. Even today in the post-method era, this idea prevails in some teaching contexts worldwide, and it is known as the "enlightened or eclectic" approach. (Brown, 1994:74)

Communicative Language Teaching

The word approach receives prominence because it entails a theoretical rationale underlying teachers´ practices in classrooms. Apparently, teachers will develop their own approach to teaching based upon theories about language, learning, and language-learning. The approach that has been most widely accepted by teachers is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and the reasons that support it are numerous. Scholars such as Brumfit and Finnochiaro offered one of the most comprehensive lists of CLT features. David Nunan is one of the scholars who has come closer to the concept of communication in language learning. For the purpose of this project, we adhere to his characterization of CLT as it appears in Brown, 1994:

1. An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
2. The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
3. The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the learning process itself.
4. An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.
5. An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activation outside the classroom.

CLT is derived from a *multidisciplinary* perspective that includes areas such as linguistics, psychology, sociology, educational research, and second language acquisition (Savignon 1991). These fields have helped teachers understand communication in classrooms, but they have also posed many challenges on *how* teachers accomplish such an endeavor. The numerous attempts to better establish how communication is attained in classrooms by means of activities such as games, role-plays, songs, pair and group work have yielded some results, but the question on how communication is generated still lies there; and it becomes essential that one goes back to the meaning of communication, and how it is viewed in language classrooms.

Teaching English as Communication

Traditionally, communication in classrooms has been viewed as –*getting your message across*- Savignon (1983), and teachers have worked really hard so that their students get their messages across within the paradigm of communicative competence namely grammatical, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, discourse and strategic *Canale and Swain* (1980). Nevertheless, many of their efforts have concentrated on the forms of the components of each of the elements that define communicative competence. Many times teachers have ignored that language itself is the vehicle for communication in classrooms. People communicate about events in life. These events can take many forms which language will shape, but those events are what really matter in people's encounters. Savignon 1991, states it as follows:

> The interest of a football game lies of course not in the football, but in the moves and strategies of the players as they fake, pass, and punt their way

along the field. The interest of communication lies similarly in the moves and strategies of the participants. The terms that best represent the collaborative nature of what goes on are *interpretation, expression and negotiation of meaning*.

The conception of communication as *interpretation, expression and negotiation of meaning* gives teachers a bigger space to develop their teaching of languages. Nevertheless, the next concept that comes to our minds is *meaning*. Which meanings? What do we want to mean? These two questions and many more questions may be solved if the teaching of languages through content is developed. Content not only gives meanings to use the language but also involves the meaning makers cognitively, which is another aspect that is often disregarded in the teaching of languages. Henry Widdowson (1978: 16) shares this very same idea when he suggests that a foreign language should be associated with areas of the school curriculum in which the learners would find a link between the language and their experiences, and by making this connection, they would have **the most certain means** of viewing language as communication.

Content-Based Instruction

Content-Based Instruction (**CBI**) is an instructional approach in which the language is used as a medium of instruction for various aspects of the subject matter being taught. In content-based classrooms, students are exposed to complex information and are part of demanding activities in which both knowledge and language are developed.

Language learners of all ages will always have the necessity to talk about their own experiences and realities. For some speakers it will be enough to handle conversations on everyday topics, but for some others there will be a strong desire to discuss how they feel about the description of the human genome, or how fantastic it is to explore Jane Austin's narrative.

It is not enough for language learners to be able to interact successfully in another language on everyday topics. Most of the time, they will be asked to conceptualize aspects of their profession or field of study. They will probably need to stand up for something giving plausible arguments. Content-based instruction allows learners to expose themselves to a variety of registers or styles of speech which will put them in contact with the community, or the

conventions that a particular community has to regulate its interactions. Current worldwide demand for highly qualified professionals in language and content-knowledge, provides English teachers with an excellent opportunity for professional growth and research in content-based instruction. This may be an effective way to help learners in the interpretation, expression and negotiation of meaning in context.

Consequently, language teachers need to get in touch with the latest findings in issues related to communicative competence, second language acquisition, and content-based instruction in order to devise the best instructional activities geared towards the attainment of communication in classrooms.

Content-Based Instruction has had applications in various settings ranging from English for Specific Purposes, Second Language Immersion Programs for K-12 students, and several vocational and workplace instructional contexts. Recently it has spread in university-level foreign language instruction and contexts in English for Academic Purposes (Snow and Brinton, 1996:5)

Since its beginning with the work of scholars in language and content, Content-Based Instruction has received considerable attention and theoretical support in different areas. Cummins (1984, 1989) introduced the notion of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) as opposed to Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). He argues that the former are the skills students need to build on, to succeed in academic learning environments. The latter are skills to express basic communicative needs.

Besides the work in the area of second language acquisition, there is also research in areas such as cognitive learning theory (Anderson, 1983), depth-of-processing research (Anderson, 1990a), discourse comprehension processing (Spiro et al., 1987), expertise research (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1993), motivation, attribution and interest research (Krapp et all, 1992). These areas of investigation have established a solid rational for CBI in second language teaching.

Teaching languages through content contributes in a number of ways to the development of students´ communicative competence in classrooms since the spirit of CBI (Content-Based Instruction) has many elements that bring about communication. This conception of communication has some factors that are worth mentioning:

1. The cognitive and linguistic domains go hand in hand in instruction.

2. Communication takes place not only in social contexts but also in academic ones.

3. Language variation plays a key role since students will be exposed to authentic materials that are part of the literacy environment in the target community.

4. The wide diversity of content material may be highly motivational for students because they will be exposed to information that either interests them or responds to their motivations.

The description of how language learning was viewed until the development of an approach defined as Communicative Language Teaching and its ulterior shortcomings pass on to us the responsibility to develop frameworks that integrate content and language through a mode of teaching known as CONTENT-BASED INSTRUCTION. This approach to teaching will be based upon three bases (Stryker and Leaver, 1997):

i. Subject matter instruction

There are numerous contexts with their curricular proposals in which CBI can be set up to guide teachers´ practices. We can mention K-12 ESL Contexts, K-12 EFL Contexts, and University ESL/EFL Contexts.

ii. Authentic language and texts

Text selection will take place based upon the considerations made by the contents and their curricular plans. It can be said that there is a considerable amount of textbooks and related literature especially designed to meet the needs of ESL/EFL populations.

iii. Student cognitive and affective involvement

Nowadays the learner is receiving a lot of attention from psychology in areas such as learning and behavior patterns, cognitive development and affective factors such as motivation, interest and self-involvement. At the same time there has been a great deal of research in various aspects of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) which have generated important insights in the understanding of how learners acquire and further develop a second or foreign language.

CBI Perspective at the Pontificia Bolivariana University

After reviewing several experiences in CBI settings such as K-12 education, workplace literacy, and universities, we decided to explore some key concepts that are present in most of them and are the backbone of many proposals in CBI. Our approach to CBI is based on the idea that a teacher's balanced exploitation of content area knowledge and language, his/her use of authentic material, and the explicit modeling and use of student learning strategies to approach learning, contribute to the development of academic and linguistic competencies for prospective professionals in specific fields of study at Pontificia Bolivariana University. In sum, *the teacher and his/her teaching, the relationship between content and language, and the learners and their learning* are the key concepts for our line of inquiry.

Besides these ideas on how to start to assume CBI in the university setting, we were also required to set up an experience involving professors from the different faculties of the University. The criteria to select these professors, regarded within this project as experts, were based on the information collected in a survey administered to the university faculty in order to determine their levels of proficiency in English, the amount of English they used in their programs, and their desire to belong to a group of people interested in working with CBI.

A profile for the expert-content teachers was then set up and categorized in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes as follows:

Knowledge

- Expert knowledge of his/her field of study.
- Intermediate level of language proficiency in English.
- Promotion of content learning in a foreign language.

Skills

- Abilities to promote communication in class.
- Attention to both the cognitive and linguistic abilities of his students.
- Interest in engaging his students in innovative practices.

Attitudes

- Willing to be part in the experience of working subject matter content in a foreign language.

- Show interest towards the learning opportunities in both content and language.

- Reflective appraisal of his/her teaching practice.

Once an initial list of candidates was established, a series of preliminary meetings were planned so that the expert-content teachers would become informed about the nature of the project, its purposes, and how it was viewed from the perspective of the language teachers. A series of *qualification sessions* were devised to give, content-expert teachers, further insight in the concepts of CBI and the Model developed for the UPB. One of the most important premises for the *qualification sessions* was for content expert teachers to realize the importance of their participation, their ideas and input regarding their areas of expertise. Most of the decisions on how the CBI experience was going to be structured in each context, would be based on their feedback, on how they understood the status of knowledge, and the learners´ profile as prospective professionals.

Additionally, a strategy where content-expert and language teachers teamed up to develop sessions of the regular courses in undergraduate studies was set forth, so a segment of the courses would become CBI. The qualification sessions were also designed to be a space for discussion. Not only where the advantages of CBI were to be debated, but also its possible shortcomings. That is, factors such as the demands on content and language; the complexity of some of the topics; the levels of foreign language proficiency; the amount of time to spend in working in both content and language. In addition, the possibility of 'watering down' the content so that the students would be able to meet the demands in language, were some of the necessary ideas to account for.

The collaborative nature of this project was to be reinforced by the establishment of common understandings between language teachers and content-experts. Throughout the experience, the language teachers persistently contribute to the bridging of content and language through strategies that would allow content-expert teachers to meet their cognitive requirements.

The CBI research group predicts that as content-expert teachers become more acquainted with the major instructional components of CBI, they will be able to exemplify and develop workshops for their classrooms, implementing different CBI strategies that will be previously modeled for them during their qualification sessions.

A methodology in content-based instruction

The term methodology takes us back to the ideas developed by Anthony (1963), Richards and Rodgers (1982); however, the perspective we want to embrace is that of Polly Ulichny (1996). She argues that teachers develop interpretive frameworks that are shaped by their experiences, their professional knowledge and folk wisdom. Teachers interpret and act on their teaching based on the dynamics of the classroom interaction.

This definition of methodology allows teachers to create, implement, revise and redesign what they do in classrooms. The reason such an idea of methodology is relevant for our approach to CBI is that there are different considerations teachers need to make about their understanding of their area of expertise, their delivery, the handling of content and language, and the monitoring of their students´ learning. Since language is not the guiding principle in CBI courses, students are not programmed to study aspects of the language based on any specific criteria as it happens in grammar, situational or functional approaches to teaching. In CBI the nature of content does determine the nature of language. This characteristic makes CBI both challenging and thought provoking for the possibilities of learning and communicating in English.

Both the expert teacher and the language teacher will set meetings in order to plan the content of their classes. The expert teacher will select a section of his/her course; they define some topics for which s/he has materials in English. These topics are part of the course, so the discussions, papers, tests, and products from those sessions are part of the students´ evaluation at the end of the semester. The language teacher suggests the most relevant language approach to the material depending on the content. The class delivery will also be discussed since some materials are more appropriate to be taught through lectures, while others are more suitable for group discussions or class presentations. Emphasis will be given to aspects of the content-expert's perspective in regards to their area of expertise, the related fields of study,

the handling of language and content demands, and the amount of students´ involvement and participation in the classroom tasks.

The content-expert teacher will give special attention to the perspective s/he is going to develop for a particular content, s/he has to think about the learning purposes, and how his/her class delivery needs to address both content and language. In this aspect, the language teacher helps the expert develop awareness towards the linguistic requirements that may hinder content comprehension; consequently, s/he needs to find ways to deal with these demands for students to understand the content. There are strategies that s/he may use such as showing students how information is assembled in a particular text, or providing students with signposts to follow his/her lectures.

Regarding content and language, both expert and language teachers need to make explicit how different fields of study have developed their own ways to communicate, and how they use particular genres that regulate the communication among their members (Swales, 1990). Content teachers make students familiar with texts such as research articles, laboratory protocols, and grant proposals. By exposing students to these texts and their features and by creating opportunities for students to communicate using these genres, content teachers are promoting the cognitive development that is at the heart of content-based instruction. Probably, the most important consideration is the one about language and content since this relationship is taken for granted due to the fact that the proficiency in the language is not at stake in the students' native language. In CBI, this relationship has to be taken seriously because it plays a major role in determining classroom interactions and both language and content learning.

Students and their learning are also elements that the expert teachers have to bear in mind in order to design and implement their lessons. Besides showing them ways to think about the world from their fields of expertise, they also need to present students with strategies to tackle learning using relevant plans for their field of study. The competencies required for professionals nowadays go beyond the portfolio of studies, merits, seniority, and certifications and move towards problem-solving approaches in different aspects of their professions. Consequently, students who have received explicit teaching and training in strategies are more flexible and have many more possibilities to adapt to different situations or working environments.

The teacher and his/her teaching, the relationship between content and language, and the inclusion of the learner and their learning processes have become our working theory to work with CBI at UPB. Our work is far from being conclusive or entirely successful; however, it offers a more open-minded attitude towards language learning. We strongly believe that there is more to learning English than talking about the weather, or how to order meals at a restaurant. We also consider that learners have a life full of experiences in academic and non-academic settings that may become the ground for communication.

Line of Inquiry

Our study sessions and discussions have provided us with lots of questions and ideas for the teaching of English at the university. We have outlined many different possibilities to pursue CBI. One of such possibilities is research. The teacher and his/her teaching, the approach to content and language, and the considerations about learners and their learning are our line of inquiry from which a hypothesis has been formulated.

The hypothesis is based on the assumption that prospective professionals at UPB will develop both academic and linguistic competencies in a foreign language, if teachers make conscious attempts to incorporate cognitively challenging activities that require the appropriate use of the language as well as the involvement of students in their learning process beyond knowledge recollection, reading comprehension, or language translation.

The territory of our exploration is going to include elements from the ethnographic research approach. This is due to the fact that the status of knowledge and its practices are at stake in the teaching culture of university professors, at both graduate and undergraduate levels. To such effect the following instruments of data collection are going to be used: surveys, feedback cards, interviews and participant and non-participant observation. The previous concepts will guide our data collection and analysis, we hope they will provide us with a series of results that will have a positive impact on the university administrators, professors, students and the community as a whole, and in an attempt to make English more relevant in students' lives.

Project implications

The approach of the CBI model designed for UPB has implied defining many elements to grant it the possibility of adjusting to the university's current

requirements and needs. To such effect, the research group has had to seriously look at context of the project and at the challenges posed by higher education in the field of language teaching. This has led us to adopt a model of Content Based Instruction that requires a special teacher profile, in which content area knowledge, attitude and abilities combine to take on a reflexive and critical approach to teaching. The roles of the work to be performed by expert and language teachers in the experience have also had to be addressed. Their responsibilities and interaction are established in such a way that the model may be understood as dynamic, in which content and language learning foster constant upgrading and articulation to the curricular proposals set in each of academic programs.

To achieve those goals, a professional qualification course has been designed. Its intention is to grant project participants better in-depth understanding of the dynamics and processes that take place in the classroom as they use a Content Based Approach. We expect this experience to show expert teachers how a class directed by CBI principles, has the power to invigorate their practice and student engagement.

The teacher and his/her teaching

The initial repercussions of the project will shed light on the teachers and their teaching practice. The professional qualification sessions, as Kumaravadivelu (2003, p. 2) states, provide spaces where teachers:

> need to systematically observe their teaching, interpret their classroom events, evaluate their outcomes, identify problems, find solutions, and try them out to see once again what works and what doesn't. In other words, they have to become strategic thinkers as well as strategic practitioners. As strategic thinkers, they need to reflect on the specific needs, wants, situations, and processes of learning and teaching. As strategic practitioners, they need to develop knowledge and skills necessary to self-observe, self-analyze, and self-evaluate their own teaching acts.

These reflections will cause different pedagogical issues to be discussed, making university professors more aware of the importance of engaging student in content and language learning while accounting for their different learning styles and the different strategies available to accommodate them.

The project contemplates the use of the Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning, proposed by Ann Uhl Chamot...[et al.] 1999, in her book, The Learning Strategies Handbook.

It offers the possibility of a recursive application of its components: Planning, Monitoring, Problem Solving and Evaluating. We believe that through this course of action, aided by the cooperation between content and language teachers in class design, the reshaping and modification of the exchanges generated in the different classroom situations will grant sound student engagement in the experience.

Content and Language Interactions

The nature of discourse exchange intending to balance learning while generating interaction in the foreign language is also being addressed. Given that the expert teachers are in charged of providing such balance during class, they have become acquainted with what Fredricka Stoller, calls Sound Teaching Practices that Lend Themselves to the Natural Integration of Language and Content:

- Extended input, meaningful output, and feedback on language and grasp of content

- Information gathering, processing, and reporting

- Integrated skills

- Task-based activities and project work, enhanced by cooperative learning principles

- Strategy training

- Visual support

- Culminating synthesis activities

In a foreign language situation, such as ours, instructors will also have to look into the use of linguistic adjustments, the application of strategic reading and writing activities and the manipulation of academic language. These will make content accessible to students, enabling them to cope with content matter without having them master the language.

Students and Their Learning Processes

Students´ strengths and weaknesses in their learning process are being targeted by using the *Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning, proposed by Ann Uhl Chamot…[et al.], 1999*. This dynamic model proposes four interacting phases: planning, monitoring, problem solving and evaluation. Thus students implement forethought to approach and carry out different tasks; they check and adjust their work as required; they use contextual clues both in language and content; and they are able to determine if their predictions and expectations on goals and tasks are met.

Future Scopes of the Project

The present article sets the premises of application for the project; the following phases will set the theoretical framework in motion to confirm and make the necessary adjustments to the CBI-UPB Model after analyzing the data gathered from project participants.

Through the analysis of the context's conditions, in reference to the professional staff and students' competences in English, the research group considers that there is a strong need for a CBI Support System to warrant the project's validity and its constant upgrading. Other possible horizons include, offering foreign language courses oriented by CBI principles and designing courses guided towards the improvement of language proficiency of teachers wanting to participate in the experience.

The project will render more information in regards to the collaborative work and the thoughts and changes produced in the participants as the activities proposed for the following phases are developed.

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